

RESPECTING OUR UMPIRES

Sometimes at regattas there is a lack of respect and courtesy from coaches, rowers and spectators towards boat race officials (Umpires). The decisions of umpires are sometimes questioned very inappropriately; there are formal channels for decisions to be appealed and these should be followed. There is no excuse for debating umpires' instructions or decisions on the regatta course.

We all agree that umpires need to be accountable, just as rowers and coaches are on regatta day. They need to know and understand the rules, understand their positions and make good decisions. They also should show respect to the rowers and coaches involved in the regatta they are officiating. There is an expectation that umpires perform, just as our rowers do. One thing to remember is that umpires, like rowers may make mistakes during a regatta.

If you do disagree with an umpire, the correct protocol is to go and see the President of the Jury and discuss your concern. It is not acceptable to debate the umpire in question on the spot.

Everyone gets frustrated at times with an umpire's decision but there are procedures in place for challenging decisions, and participants should never disobey an instruction while on the course, nor abuse an umpire.

If a coach does so, this sets a very bad example for young rowers. Young athletes follow by example, and if they see their own coach confronting an umpire, they think it's ok for them to do the same.

Our umpires undergo considerable training to become an Umpire and volunteer many hours for the benefit of all participating in the sport. Our umpires are expected to make quick decisions under pressure and this is not an easy task.

The role of the umpires must be recognized and respected by the coaches, the rowers, and the spectators. The umpire in competition has complete authority over rowers and coaches at the regatta.

It is an umpire's job to officiate the regatta within the rules and keep our rowers safe. We need to remind everyone involved in our sport of the consequences if you abuse an umpire. The actions can have a much greater impact than what you think. As coaches, rowers and spectators we need to treat umpires with respect and courtesy.

We can all help ensure the health and safety of umpires in future by starting to educate our kids on showing and treating umpires with respect. Coaches, rowers, parents, and spectators should never argue or dispute the decision of an umpire, make negative or derogatory remarks or gestures towards an umpire, or otherwise behave inappropriately to disturb the normal course of a regatta. Not only is this behaviour setting a bad example for rowers, it distracts the umpire, makes the Coach's job harder, and takes away from the enjoyment of the regatta. Remember, it's only a sport and it's important to set a good example of respecting the umpire for our young participants.